



# COMMUNICATION UPDATE

## READY FOR REVIEW:

CSPPS project to support Civil Society engagement in FCAS-countries going for 2019 Voluntary National Review

HLPF July 2019



# BACKGROUND

**HLPF 2019** – The High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) is the main United Nations platform on sustainable development and it has a central role in the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at global level. It takes place every year in New York in July.

**VNR Process** – The HPLF is an opportunity for member states to report on a voluntary basis on the progress achieved to implement the SDGs at the national and sub-national levels, through a government-led and inclusive review, called a Voluntary National Review (VNR). Regular reviews by the HPLF are to be voluntary, state-led, undertaken by both developed and developing countries, and involve multiple stakeholders, including civil society. VNRs aim to facilitate the sharing of experiences , including successes, challenges and lessons learned, with a view to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. VNRs also seek to strengthen policies and institutions of governments and to mobilize multi-stakeholder support and partnerships for the implementation of the SDGs.

**What is at stake in 2019** – The theme of the HPLF in 2019 is “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality”. For the first time since the creation of the 2030 Agenda in 2015, SDG 16 is going for a detailed review in July 2019, among a group of other SDGs (namely Goals 4, 8, 10, 13 and 17). SDG 16 seeks to promote peaceful, just and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

# COLLABORATION BETWEEN CSPPS, EU/DEVCO, AND MEAE

The Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (CSPPS) is a global network of civil society actors, experts and academics from the South and the North who work together to support peacebuilding and statebuilding projects in fragile situations. CSPPS enjoys the support of the EU Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO) to implement its workplan in 2019-2020.

On 1 January 2019, CSPPS embarked on a one-year collaboration with the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE) to enable CSPPS to sustain and expand its work to amplify the voice of civil society within the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS), and to operationalise the Ministry's holistic approach to addressing crises and fragilities. More specifically, with the support of the MEAE and DEVCO, CSPPS will ensure the meaningful inclusion, participation and contribution of civil society during VNR processes – with a focus on SDG 16+ – within a group of selected countries, namely Côte d'Ivoire, the Central African Republic, Chad, Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste and Rwanda.



# ROADMAP

## TIMELINE – 2019



## OBJECTIVE AND ACTIVITIES

Since the submission of the first project proposal to the MEAE (in December 2018), and in accordance with the latest developments since January 2019, CSPPS has slightly adapted its proposed objectives and planned activities to ensure a more effective and tailored approach to the national contexts in which the CSOs it supports are operating. The general objective remains the same : *to strengthen the voice and capacity of civil society to effectively engage in, and influence, peacebuilding and statebuilding as a critical contribution to crisis prevention and sustainable peace and development for all.*

At the Secretariat level in Europe, the support provided will help the Platform implement its workplan and initiate contact with French NGOs (Coordination SUD and FORUS) and relevant sections of the MEAE (AFD, CIV, Expertise France) with a view to exploring collaboration opportunities. At the country level on the ground, the support provided will enable CSPPS to ensure – to the extent possible depending on the political context – with the help of the TAP Network the meaningful inclusion, participation and contribution of national and local CSOs (including through targeted outreach to involve youth- and women-led organisations) during the consultation and validation stages of the VNR process in Côte d’Ivoire, the Central African Republic, Chad, Sierra Leone, and Timor-Leste through nationally-held orientation and sensitization workshops and capacity development workshops. CSPPS is also expanded its collaboration with the TAP Network in Nigeria and Rwanda. Subsequently, both during and after the HLPF, CSPPS is organising a peer-to-peer exchange to reflect upon the VNR experiences of CSO representatives involved.

# CURRENT STATE OF PLAY: COUNTRY UPDATES 1/4

## CÔTE D'IVOIRE



In coordination with its national focal point organisation (FNDP), local civil society partner ISC/ODD-CI and the UNDP office in Côte d'Ivoire, and with the support of an expert facilitator (ADIN/TAP Network), the CSPPS Secretariat held two workshops on the SDGs review and the VNR process in Abidjan (26-27 April) and Bouaké (30 April-1 May). In addition, the Secretariat met with government ministries (economy, sustainable development) and the French delegation.

Being the hub of the country's economy in addition to hosting a large number of national and local CSOs, the city of Abidjan was the first stop in the VNR consultation process.

The decision to hold the second workshop in Bouaké was strategic in that it brought the consultation process to CSOs based inland, and also symbolic because the town is still recovering from its past as a rebel stronghold at the time of the 2010-11 Ivorian crisis.



Abidjan workshop, 26-27 April



Bouaké workshop, 30 April-1 May



Official meeting with Ministry of Sustainable Dvpmt, 29 April

## CURRENT STATE OF PLAY: COUNTRY UPDATES 2/4

### CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC



Following the SDG and VNR orientation and sensitization workshop for CSOs the CSPPS Secretariat and Cordaid held in Bangui back in February, CSPPS joined forces with the Ministry of Economy, Planning and International Cooperation, Cordaid, World Vision, and TAP Network and held an SDG and VNR workshop for local CSOs on 7 May as a crucial final step towards collecting civil society's contribution for the VNR consultation process.



### CHAD



CSPPS, its Country Team focal point and ADIN expert (TAP Network) completed an SDG and VNR consultative workshop in N'Djamena, Chad on 13-14 June. The meeting offered an opportunity to provide inputs in the final stages of the VNR Report validation process in Chad, right at the same time the government was finalizing its SDG national report. Next to the workshop, CSPPS also attended side-meetings with the EU delegation and UNDP country office.

# CURRENT STATE OF PLAY: COUNTRY UPDATES 3/4



## SIERRA LEONE



In Sierra Leone, CSPPS partnered with the TAP Network to co-support a workshop on the VNR process and SDG16 in Makeni on 12-13 June jointly organized by ChildHelp Sierra Leone, Non-State Actors Secretariat and the CSPPS New Deal Country Team. CSPPS Secretariat has ensured in-country coordination linkages are made between local networks. In addition to producing policy recommendations, CSO workshop participants set up an SDG16+ Action Group to ensure follow-up and coordination at the national level.

## TIMOR-LESTE



In Timor-Leste, CSPPS Focal Point organisation was involved as a permanent member in the government-led SDG Working Group which prepared the SDGs national report. In addition, CSPPS, TAP Network, Asia Development Alliance (ADA) and local partners co-organised a two-day SDG16- focused workshop in Dili on 18-19 June shortly after the release of the government's SDG national report.

## CURRENT STATE OF PLAY: COUNTRY UPDATES 4/4

### RWANDA



In partnership TAP focal point organisation on the ground Human Rights First Rwanda Association, TAP Network and CSPPS co-organised an SDG16 and VNR process workshop in Kigali, Rwanda on the last week of May.



### NIGERIA



TAP Network and CSPPS are supporting respective local partner organisations CSCSD and CSDEA to organise strategic reflexion workshops in Lagos (2-3 July) and Abuja (5 July), Nigeria. Abuja SDG16 Tracking Workshop co-hosted with Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR). Though Nigeria is not embarking on a VNR-process it was felt as a key strategic country to include in the review process – also to look at current status of SDG implementation since its earlier review in 2017.





# LESSONS LEARNED:

## SNAP SHOT REFLECTIONS ON THE FIRST PHASE OF THE READY FOR REVIEW PROJECT

### **VNR consultation activities can mark a starting point for improved dialogue and coordination**

It is essential to engage at an early stage with a variety of national and international key stakeholders, and to gain a basic understanding of what's in the pipeline, how to better coordinate activities, delineate tasks amongst organisations, and form coalitions which can cement into fruitful working relationships. For instance in Côte d'Ivoire the partnership established with local civil society platform ISC-ODD/CI and UNDP did not end after carrying out the consultative workshops. Partners are currently planning a follow-up capitalization workshop after the HLPF.

### **Know what your added value is and shine a light on it**

Contrary to the government or UNDP, civil society enjoys absolute proximity to the concerns, grievances and expectations of the population. The workshop methodology was accordingly developed to focus on bringing out this qualitative added value of society's contribution to the VNR process in order not to replace but to complement the more technically-oriented support as provided by UNDP experts and consultants (quantitative data collection, etc.) put in charge of preparing the national report on SDGs.

## **Lack of VNR experience can be palliated by early preparation and organisation**

Countries going for review for the first time but who prepared themselves early for the VNR process were able to “step into the unknown” with more confidence to report for the first time on SDG16 and better handle unforeseen challenges. For example in Central African Republic the government set up a multi-stakeholder inter-ministerial committee on SDGs shortly after its announcement in July 2018 to present a VNR report in 2019. Creating such a committee enabled the government to identify early on in the process challenges and opportunities thus allowing it to offer appropriate responses and identify necessary partners.

## **Context differs, which is why it matters**

Civic space, or civil society space is determining where and to what degree civil society is actively invited to be part and parcel of the consultation process. Success relies heavily on political willingness at the national level to allow for meaningful inclusion, participation and contributions of civil society to be taken on board during the VNR-processes.

## **Yes, the quality of inclusion and participation matters, but so does communication**

Governments must make efforts to include civil society in VNR processes. However, efforts need to come from both sides. Once civil society representatives have been included in SDG committees and have access to key information, civil society needs to seize that chance to mobilise its wider constituencies through pro-active and coordinated communication and ongoing consultation. The greater one is involved in a VNR process (e.g. part of a national SDG inter-ministerial committee), the more one has access to key information and is in a unique position to influence the content of a VNR report. This ability to influence discussions comes with an even greater responsibility to report back to wider constituencies on the state of discussion and preliminary results through efficient communication channels. For instance, in Chad such a feedback system between civil society inside and outside the VNR process was not optimally functioning, which in retrospect makes it a missed opportunity to ensure greater impact and effectively influence the policy debate. In other words, with inclusion and participation comes responsibility, transparency and accountability towards one’s constituency.

## **Next to securing financial support from donors it is key to include their local delegations as fully-fledged stakeholders in the process**

Support from bilateral and multilateral donors was instrumental in fostering an enabling environment for coordinated and concerted dialogue around VNR processes and the content of national SDG reports – and that involves representatives from those same donor actors in the process embarked upon, whether in consultation process, or as actor and participant in the process itself.

## **Civil society understands the opportunity provided by the VNR process and wants to do more**

Civil society does not want to limit itself to a role of qualitative reviewer. It would like to actively contribute to the process and add its voice in the strategic review of progress made on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Wherever CSPPS Country Teams were in the lead to organise and host SDG16 and VNR consultative workshops, we can testify for civil society's overwhelming aspiration to have the capacity to contribute to data collection and analysis hopefully in the near future – by the time their government makes the decision to review national progress on the Agenda 2030 again.

## **Whenever possible, open up the VNR workshop planning process to other local partners outside of usual partners, and vice versa**

The presence of organized civil society around key thematic areas is helpful and has provided entry point for strategic discussions as to how the VNR process could be backed through the support of CSPPS country team colleagues in partnership with local partners from the TAP Network and wider civil society representatives. Examples from our country experiences testify to the added value of a multi-stakeholder approach embarked upon in context of the SDG review and VNR-consultations.

# VOICES OF SDG16+ VIDEO CAMPAIGN



The United Nations committed to achieving peaceful, just, and inclusive societies through Sustainable Development Goal 16+ (SDG16+), which is part of the 2030 Agenda’s call to achieve peace and sustainable development in every country around the world. To achieve this, we all have an important part to play.

CSPPS is partnering with the TAP Network, Saferworld, IPI and eleven other CSOs in the **Voices of SDG16+: Stories for Global Action** video campaign. The campaign asked people and partners around the world to share how they are contributing to advancing SDG16+ in their own community or country. Voices of SDG16+: Stories for Global Action is asking people to do this through recording short videos of their work in action, which are being showcased on a dedicated web platform leading up to the 2019 HLPF.

The best videos will be showcased at an event during the United Nations High-Level Political Forum in July, with selected candidates sponsored to attend in person at the event “Voices of SDG16+ Policy Forum: Public Event. Exploring Voices campaign, civil society role in Goal 16”, on 11 July at 777 United Nations Plaza, 12th Floor, from 12 to 3 PM.

# NEXTS STEPS

The partnership as embarked upon with the TAP Network has enabled both networks to pool together resources as well as combined their partner networks. The outcomes of the resulting broader civil society consultation processes did help to amplify the voice of civil society in the VNR-processes in selected countries. More detailed country reports are under preparation.

CSPPS and the TAP Network will further harvest learnings emanating from the process, document lessons learned and embark on cross-exchange of experiences. Presenting VNRs at the HLPF is an important step but not the end point of the process. Ideally the review undertaken should give a comprehensive and honest report on where a country stands in the process of actualization and implementation of the 2030 Agenda – and is also to indicate the next steps and recommendations on how to further accelerate the implementation of the agenda in their country contexts.

The learnings emanating from the Ready for Review process are hoped to inform subsequent review processes. The VNR consultation processes as embarked upon clearly have provided a strategic entry point for continuous dialogue and coordination around next steps in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at country level.

# ORGANISATIONS WE ARE WORKING WITH

<p>The Transparency, Accountability and Participation Network (TAP Network)</p> <p>The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC)</p> <p>The Catholic Organisation for Relief and Development Aid (CORDAID)</p> <p>World Vision</p> <p>FriEnt</p>	<p>Search for Common Ground</p> <p>United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY)</p> <p>Partners for Review</p> <p>UNDP / The Global Alliance for Reporting Progress on Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies</p>
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